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ABSTRACT

This bulletin looks in more detail at the attempt of several local education agencies in Great Britain to deliver a Youth Training Scheme (YTS) program based on modular training. The paper covers in detail effective program review, an integral part of the training program. Topics discussed include training programs (on- and off-the-job opportunities and trainee reviews); guidance and support; assessment and review; progression; effective program review; Mainframe response (review processes conducted by the Bedfordshire Youth Training Group, the Haringey processes conducted by the Bedfordshire Youth Training Group, the Haringey Education Service Training Agency, and Sheffield Hallmark); implementation issues; and commentary. For each of these topics, explanations are given of the ideal way in which evaluation should be pursued, and examples of the actual ways in which they are being carried out are included. The report concludes with commentary that a wide variation was found in both practice and effectiveness of program review procedures; continued improvement in the process is recommended. (KC)

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FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT

TWO-YEAR YOUTH TRAINING SCHEMES

An evaluation of LEA modular programmes

No. 5 October 1988 *ISBN 1 85338 084 9*

IMPLEMENTING A MODULAR YTS PROGRAMME

Earlier bulletins in this series have described the ways in which three collaborating LEAs– Bedfordshire, Haringey and Sheffield (now called MainFrame) – joined by Liverpool LEA and the Wirral Metropolitan College have begun to work together to develop a Youth Training Scheme based on modular training and unit credit transfer. A summary of the interim findings of the FEU evaluation of this collaborative project was presented in *Bulletin No.4* in the series. This was largely an evaluation of the model being constructed, with an assessment of some of the difficulties of its implementation. This bulletin, the fifth in the series, looks in more detail at their attempt to deliver a quality YTS programme based on modular training. An integral part of this delivery is the process of effective programme review, which has to be built into the implementation.

Delivering modular training

According to the Training Agency's requirements, each Approved Training Organisation (ATO) must submit its training plans to the local Area Boards for approval. These plans should be drawn up following consideration of local training needs and liaison with other providers. **Training plans** should indicate:

- what trainees will be able to do at the end of the scheme;
- who will be responsible for training;
- where the various parts of the training will take place;
- the induction programme;
- the pattern of attendance for off-the-job training, e.g. day or block release;
- the broad outline of scheme content (but not detailed syllabus);
- the skill-learning opportunities available in planned work experience;
- how the planned work experience will be integrated with off-the-job training/education.

In accordance with this requirement, the MainFrame collaborative programme designed two training plan summaries:

A - for the on-the-job liaising programme

B - for the off-the-job training.

These proformas allowed most of the information required for each individual's training programme to be recorded. Because of the complexity of recording all the competence statements on such a document, the modules to be covered were listed. Each trainee file kept by the managing agent should have contained the modules listed, updated at regular intervals by the trainees' liaison officer. The FEU evaluation found that the use of training plans A and B was extensive only in Bedfordshire. Furthermore, it was discovered that separate training plans for on- and off-the-job training did not assist the process of integration. Subsequently, a working party has recommended that these training plans be

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abandoned in favour of a single large sheet – the **Training Inventory** – a central record of all achievements of a trainee.

Staff involved with the MainFrame programme should have been issued with a staff handbook which gives guidance on writing training plans. The evaluation revealed that very few of the staff interviewed had used this handbook. The consequence was that a wide variety of practices were noted across the three authorities. This handbook points out that young people will come to the scheme by various means and with differing strengths and interests, and that three factors need to be borne in mind when forming programmes:

- the young person;
- work experience and training;
- off-the-job education and training.

This provides a standard model which will lead to training plans for both on- and off-the-job training – discussed in *Bulletin No. 3* on individual programme design.

Training programmes

Ideally, **work experience placements** should be identified and recorded in terms of the opportunities they give for training and attainment. These should be matched against the bank of modules and a potential list of modules for use (either partially or totally) in that workplace drawn up. The constraints of the workplace in terms of what opportunities it can provide, and when, needs also to be noted (e.g. seasonal factors). However, in actuality there is often a problem of obtaining sufficient and appropriate work placements, and this occasionally means that modules are not negotiated, or, in a few instances, used at all. Typically, employers and workplace supervisors feel that the selection of appropriate modules is done by the agencies' liaison officers. Trainees rarely feel that they have had very much say in this process.

Off-the-job opportunities should be recorded in terms of the learning experiences they offer and the qualifications or credits to which they can lead. These should be matched against the bank of modules and a potential list for use (either part or totally) in off-the-job training drawn up. In practice, off-the-job training is led by the pre-existing national qualification syllabuses; modules are selected on their fit with these qualifications. In many instances, modules have been derived from these syllabuses and therefore match them. However, off-the-job tutors typically complain about duplication of paperwork. In cases where trainees are not entered for a national qualification, or where they are not likely to pass, the modules provide a systematic and comprehensive record of achievements.

In order to plan a training programme for an individual trainee, three sets of criteria have to be applied:

- the trainee's entitlements, needs, strengths and interests;
- the YTS framework which requires the delivery of the four outcomes;
- additional scheme quality criteria such as breadth, balance, progression opportunities, etc. – this will involve the application of the core checklist.

The minimum number of modules each trainee must cover each year must also be considered.

In addition to looking at **breadth** and **balance** , the agencies are all concerned to ensure **equal opportunities**. This may in some cases require taking positive action to discriminate in favour of gender or ethnic groups, which will affect the **negotiation** of their programme. These steps should lead to a list of modules which can be entered on a training plan or the new training inventory. This formation should be done by arranging the modules to ensure that:

- essential processes such as induction and initial assessment take place;
- there is a logical and efficient accumulation of achievement;
- modules support each other (e.g. theory underlying practice goes alongside role execution);
- modules addressed on- and off-the-job are synchronised;
- the levels of attainment which each module addresses aggregate to a sensible achievement target and a qualification or credit thereto.

The **regular reviews** with trainees normally result in the need to make an adjustment to the training plan in terms of sequence, need for reinforcement, additional modules, need to address further core competences, etc. Trainees appear to appreciate that this process reflects ATOs' concern for their training and future progression, in a caring way. The modular system is designed to facilitate this. On occasions where this fails to happen, it is generally a failure of the implementation of the system by individual liaison officers or workplace supervisors

rather than of the system itself. These adjustments have to be incorporated in subsequent on- or off-the-job training opportunities, which may require the location of either or both to be varied. There is evidence to show that the agencies have been able to respond in this way, although the ideal is constrained by the limitations of the availability of a range of satisfactory work placements.

Guidance and support

This is one of the key features of the YTS programme, and encompasses induction into the scheme. It is agreed that induction is of great value to trainees, assisting in their understanding of the nature and purpose of the programme and their role within it. It also serves to familiarise trainees with their working environment and helps them understand the off-the-job training they are to receive, the health and safety regulations, and the general administration of the scheme, including allowances, attendance requirements, procedures to follow, and so on.

Induction is not a once-and-for-all event at the beginning of the programme, but covers issues to do with pre-entry (what trainees need to know before they commence with the scheme), on-entry (what they need to know when they first start the scheme), the scheme (particularly at transitional key stages of their programme), and progression from the scheme. In part, this is achieved in MainFrame through the use of a *Trainees' Handbook* to provide such guidance and support, which covers such topics as how the scheme operates, how to claim allowances and expenses, what to do if absent, relevant information on health and safety, and how trainees' programmes will be put together.

In addition, collaborating ATOs have built formal guidance procedures into the design framework, as well as mechanisms for checking that such guidance is taking place. In the FEU evaluation it was found that, in addition to support and guidance from the agencies, trainees often benefited from the colleges' student guidance and careers services while on off-the-job training. Many off-the-job tutors feel that guidance and support is a central part of their role on YTS.

Assessment and review

A distinctive feature of YTS is that guidance and support should not be separated from assessment and review procedures. Induction, for example, should include an **initial assessment** of the needs of trainees. The Training Agency recommends that this takes place within the first four weeks of a trainee's programme. MainFrame treats this as part of the induction and uses it to identify:

- starting-points;
- particular learning needs;
- areas of strength and potentiality.

It is designed to encourage trainees to see assessment as a supportive activity in which they have an active role to play. Trainees are expected to negotiate their training programmes, and are key elements in the design of the delivery of the scheme.

Equally, **continuous assessment**, as FEU has recommended*, should be supportive and give guidance, fully involve the trainees, and be organised at regular intervals. This may depend on the needs of individual trainees, but individual review sessions generally occur every three months, with group reviews taking place between these, usually on off-the-job training sites. In the workplace, informal assessment of trainees may take place on a day-to-day basis if felt necessary. Both workplace supervisors and off-the-job tutors are supposed to be provided with detailed notes on assessment – not all remember being given these.

In FEU terms, assessment involves not only the recording of results but also the recording of experiences undergone by the trainee and appraisal of the value of those experiences to the trainee. MainFrame has developed procedures to achieve this. Its starting-point for YTS assessment is the set of competence statements developed for YTS programmes. These are set out on three records:

- modules of credit;
- core checklist;
- personal effectiveness inventory.

MainFrame is undertaking an extensive review of all three. It is intended that these three records are held by the trainees, their liaison officers, workplace supervisors and off-the-job tutors, with a central record kept on the new training inventory. All these people have essential roles in assessment, the liaison officer having co-ordinating responsibilities. The completion and updating of the documentation is vital – trainees cannot have attainment accredited to them until there is a **record of assessment**. With some variation both within and between the collaborating authorities, according to local circumstances, reviews are undertaken by liaison officers in concert with trainees, supervisors and

* *Supporting YTS*, 3rd edn, FEU, May 1985, para. 55.

tutors, and are of the two broad kinds outlined above – group and individual. **Group reviews** are designed to build upon trainees' collective experiences and peer group interactions, whereas **individual reviews** are designed to obtain a clear record of progress against competence objectives, and to plan the next phase of the trainees' programme on that basis. Evidence suggests that reviews generally take place as they should, although there have been cases where trainees have missed reviews, or feel they have not been involved in the process but subject to it.

Progression

The emphasis on guidance, support, assessment and review is essential if the overall aim of facilitating progression within and from the scheme is to be achieved. Trainee-centred reviewing is crucial if the individual needs of trainees are to be negotiated and built on within the two-year programme, so that each trainee may benefit and be developed as fully as possible. Feedback of formative or progressive assessment is therefore vital for progression within the scheme. Final or summative assessment seeks to ensure that each trainee is granted maximum credit for attainments during the time spent on the scheme, both on- and off-the-job. Assessment and reviews should lead to certification to demonstrate achievement in the four outcomes. For MainFrame, achievement is measured in terms of the four outcomes, as shown in figure 1.

OUTCOMES	MEASURED BY
1. Competence in a range of occupational skills	Modules
2. Competence in a range of transferable core skills	Core checklist and Modules
3. Ability to transfer skills and knowledge to new situations	Core Checklist and Modules
4. Personal effectiveness	Personal effectiveness inventory and Modules

Figure 1

Such achievements are recorded and transferred via the appropriate Training Agency forms to the leaver's certificate. Recorded achievements are mapped against existing national qualifications so progression out of YTS may be facilitated. The process through which this is being achieved will be discussed in the next bulletin in this series.

Effective programme review

Self-evaluation is an integral feature of the MainFrame collaborative programme. The three authorities have made a high-level commitment to review the provision made by their training agencies. It is an obligation of ATOs to undertake programme review, and their future status as training agencies will depend in part on the implementation of effective review procedures. The Training Agency's view is that:

> 'ATOs need to have methods of checking that the training programme is actually being delivered as they intended, and that trainees are achieving the competence objectives set out in it. This process of quality assurance ensures that the commitments made to trainees, employers and the MSC [now the Training Agency] are met. Programme review needs to be backed up by methods for gathering information about the operation of the programme.*

Essentially, all ATOs are expected to develop procedures which review the achievements of trainees on their programmes and in the four YTS outcomes (effectiveness, or the extent to which organisational objectives are achieved), and the use of resources (efficiency, or the relationship between inputs and outputs). These procedures are not an end in themselves, but the means to assess strengths and weaknesses in schemes and programmes so that improvements can be made through a rolling development plan.

FEU has listed the following reasons for undertaking evaluation:

- to ensure that the four outcomes of YTS are met;
- to clarify aims and objectives and set them in priority order;
- to identify indicators for comparison between YTS achievements in various parts of the scheme;
- to give consideration to contextual features of planning, design and delivery which may influence outcomes, and make allowances for these in the appraisal of performance;
- to consider whether organisational and administrative arrangements are most effective;
- to encourage trainees to feel that they have some say in the running of the scheme;

* *Developing Effective Programme Review*, MSC, 1987, p.3.

- to motivate staff by feeding back positive features of their performance, and to identify weaknesses that can be diminished through appropriate staff development programmes;
- to provide an analytical framework within which to discuss future changes in organisation, aims and strategies of the agency or institution.*

The Training Agency has set out what effective programme review should aim to achieve:

- monitor the quality of training experienced by young people;
- identify weaknesses in the training, and opportunities for improving it;
- identify good practice and developments, both within and outside the organisation, from which training can benefit;
- build this information into a forward plan for developing the training programme. **

Mainframe response

At present there is no single system in operation across the MainFrame partners.

Bedfordshire Youth Training Group

Bedfordshire Youth Training Group has four forums in which programme review can be said to take place, each of which has a different format and emphasis.

Programme review meetings are made up of management, liaison officers, senior liaison officers, health and safety representatives, trainee representatives, college tutors, careers staff and Training Agency staff. They are open meetings based on broad occupational areas. The agenda normally includes presentations from the agency manager/deputy manager giving information about the agency's performance over the previous year and likely developments in the coming year, and from college tutors responsible for particular occupational areas outlining progress and developments in the off-the-job training programme. There is usually a question-and-answer session on the two presentations, and a plenary session allowing all participants to express their ideas and opinions.

YTS co-ordination and development meetings are held monthly, and are attended by the four college YTS co-ordinators, the agency manager, deputy manager and programme development officer. These meetings are concerned with a range of issues involved in agency/college co-ordination, including a review of off-the- job programmes, especially for planning future provision and initiatives.

Agency management meetings are also held monthly, attended by YTS co-ordinators, the agency manager, deputy manager and programme development officer, to discuss agency co-ordination and planning. The group is involved in reviewing all aspects of the agency's programme, including content, delivery, overall performance, and cost effectiveness.

All agency staff are encouraged to attend the **in-house staff training sessions** held weekly between October and December and February and April each year. These concentrate on specific aspects of the scheme, such as briefing and information systems. Staff are given the opportunity to review agency procedures and make suggestions for improvements.

Haringey Education Service Training Agency

Haringey Education Service Training Agency has committed itself, through its development plan, to the design and implementation of a comprehensive programme review consisting of complementary systems of monitoring, evaluation and moderation. **Monitoring** refers to the systematic collection of data on trainees and programmes; this is to be computerised to the fullest extent possible. The **evaluation** process is best described as the analysis of information collected. It is intended that the major source of information will be the monitoring system, but additional data will be collected through interviews with trainees, tutors, work experience supervisors, liaison officers and management. For evaluation to be based firmly in practice and act as a spur to further development – that is, as action research – performance indicators are used to provide the context of evaluation reports, such as:

- agency starts in terms of numbers on given programmes;
- trainee starts by gender and ethnicity on each programme, and in the agency as a whole;
- retention/programme completion rates in programmes (analysed against variables such as qualifications on entry, gender, ethnicity, disability);
- post-course destinations (this is usually the immediate destination).

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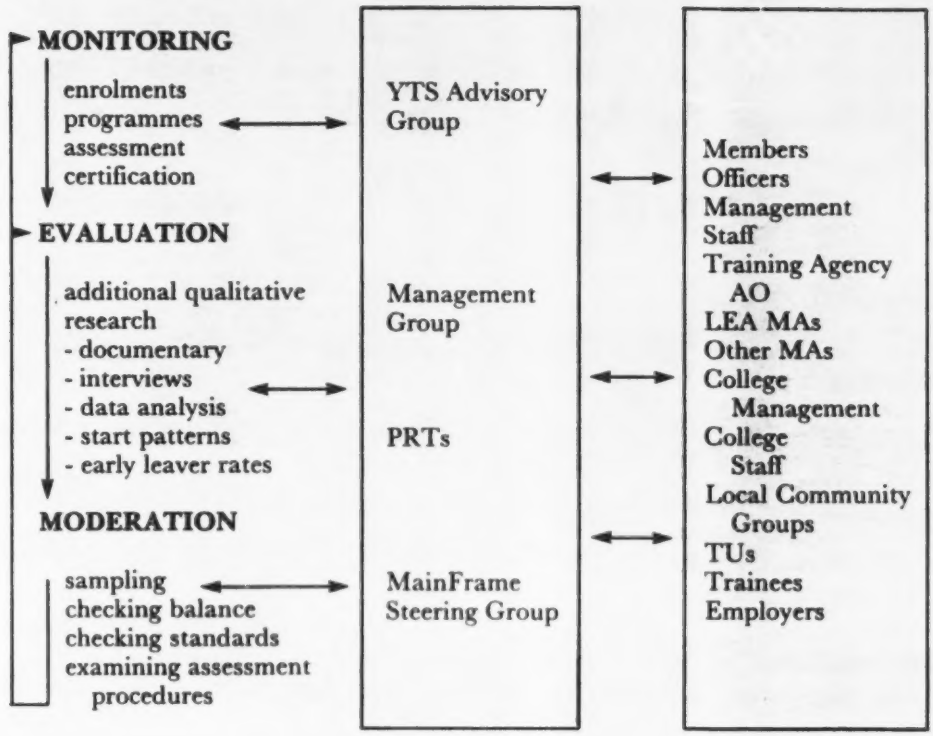
* *Supporting Quality in YTS*, FEU, to be published 1988.
** *Developing Effective Programme Review*, MSC, 1987, p.1.

Figure 2: Monitoring, evaluation and moderation



Evaluation reports will not interpret the information, for this will be the responsibility of those concerned with **moderating** programmes and assessing them against performance indicators agreed within the agency. All liaison officers in Haringey already moderate as an intrinsic part of their role. Information collected through the monitoring process will inform the moderation system, as will evaluative reports. The main source of information, however, will be reviewing trainees and programmes. Figure 2 shows how monitoring, evaluation and moderation will be integrated to form the basis of an effective system of programme review.

Figure 2 also shows that each part of the review process informs others; it is intended that each individual/group involved should have access to information relevant to programme review, which will advise their own inputs. This model has group reviews as well as programme review teams. Group reviews might be the most appropriate for making a range of adjustments to programmes, within the overall framework set. Programme review teams would examine major issues on the basis of detailed evaluation reports and structured comments, of training/ liaison officers, presented in a set format.

The agency has **monthly management meetings**. In future, one meeting in every three will measure and report on the achievements of the agency and the schemes running within it, in the context of objectives set out in the development plan. It will also receive and act upon reports from the Training Occupations Classification (TOC) based programme review teams, and from the agency's research unit. **TOC-based programme review meetings** are scheduled to take place twice a year when changes, informed by the review process, can be effectively and speedily used. The reports received will be used in the process of making decisions about the remainder of the trainees' programmes, if appropriate, and about future provision. **Group reviews** will be the main forum for trainees to comment on their perceptions of the various elements of the training process. Meetings will be informal, attended by all trainees, one or two tutors and a liaison officer, and located in the institution used for off-the-job training. The reviews will discuss the appropriateness of model programmes, trainees' views on the level of integration within the programmes, the form and content of modules, inputs, training processes and outcomes of the programmes.

Sheffield Hallmark

Sheffield Hallmark reviews take place at two levels – partner programme review groups and occupational review groups. At each level, minutes and

recommendations for action are forwarded to the Hallmark Executive. **Partner Programme Review Groups** consider:

- on-the-job training;
- off-the-job training;
- programme improvement.

In particular, they look at issues which are common across programmes such as induction, preparation for work experience and domestic issues. Minutes and recommendations for action are forwarded to the partner's management body and Hallmark Executive. Review groups have a membership of liaison officers, tutors, careers officers, YTS co-ordinators, Training Agency representatives, and trainees.

Occupational Review Groups consider:

- programme content;
- programme delivery;
- programme administration;
- work placements;
- future submissions to the Training Agency.

The groups look at cross-partner developments, with particular concern for the development of common programmes and opportunities for progression. Recommendations for action are forwarded to the Hallmark Executive. In addition to the representatives found on programme review groups, occupational review groups include employers and representatives from trades unions. Review groups currently cover ten occupational areas.

The **Hallmark Executive** receives and considers reports from all these groups and responds as appropriate. It also summarises reports for the Hallmark Management Committee.

Implementation issues

FEU has identified several issues of implementation commonly found in YTS programmes. How does MainFrame tackle them?

Integration of on- and off-the-job training

There is some evidence of trainees and employers being involved in negotiation after initial assessment, but programme design tends to be constrained by what is available in the module bank. Off-the-job training is variable, and there is some 'infilling' in two of the authorities. In some cases, programmes are led by the syllabuses of national qualifications. Liaison officers are in the best position to bring the two programme elements together and facilitate integration. The FEU interim evaluation suggested that there was some scope for improvement and, as a result, the three authorities have looked at their practice carefully and endeavoured to:

- build more flexibility into the roles of liaison officers and college/scheme tutors to facilitate, for example, more joint visits to the work placements;
- change the amount and nature of the paperwork – trainees' achievements are now recorded on a single training inventory;
- make programme reviews more effective;
- encourage employers/workplace supervisors to take an interest in off-the-job training, invite visits and negotiate training plan B;
- make more use of projects that link on- and off-the-job training;
- make liaison officers more aware of their influence over this aspect of schemes, especially in the initial design of individual programmes and changes introduced following subsequent individual review sessions with trainees.

There are limits to what can be achieved, however, because of difficulties in finding appropriate placements for some trainees and persuading some employers/supervisors and college tutors that integration is a desirable state of affairs.

Examples of 'best practice' tend to be found in schemes and workshops where off- and on-the-job tutors work closely together. It is also good where national qualification courses require work experience as part of the course, or where training is being influenced by the demands of an industry lead body. There is evidence that the scheme, on the whole, encourages off-the-job providers to respond flexibly to on-the-job training, compensating for weaknesses and reinforcing learning experiences.

Delivering the outcomes

MainFrame uses a core skills checklist based on the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) core to ensure that transferable core skills are delivered and recorded. FEU evaluation evidence suggests that it is being more widely used, although employers and supervisors still have limited awareness of it. The training inventory incorporates core skills and provides a quick reference to both achievement and progress. The checklist is often used in trainee review sessions to encourage progress and identify gaps in experience.

The design of individual programmes seeks to check that all core areas are covered during the two years

on the programme, though not always in an integrated way. Off-the-job training appears to have more flexibility here than on-the-job. In the mode of learning employed, employers/supervisors or tutors will point out to trainees when they have achieved a transferable core competence. During review sessions, they and the liaison officers will encourage trainees to reflect on the extent to which what they have been achieving are transferable skills.

The core skills checklist is useful for demonstrating to trainees the notion of a core skill which many find hard to grasp. There is little evidence that they grasp the notion of skill ownership; they are typically involved in the negotation of core skills, identification of gaps, and making of suggestions for future action in their individual reviews which take place every eight weeks approximately.

MainFrame has developed a **Personal Effectiveness Inventory (PEI)** to measure the fourth YTS outcome. However, there is much diversity of practice across the three authorities and practitioners have expressed dissatisfaction with the nature of the statements, the language, their bias towards the workplace, and its failure to show progression. A working party set up by MainFrame to review the PEI recommended that it should be revised. A new version has been developed, and there is evidence that employers and liaison officers find it more satisfactory. PEI statements are also incorporated into the training inventory.

Learning processes

The FEU interim evaluation discovered that trainees found **participative learning** a difficult concept to understand. Less than a third of the 1988 sample of trainees felt they had participated in the design of their programmes (32.1%), yet there was evidence to show that comments made during individual reviews, of improvements to programmes, were acted upon. Neither workplace learning nor off-the-job training was characterised by participative learning. Self-directed projects were clear examples of trainees taking the initiative and responsibility for their own learning. Paradoxically, many trainees felt neglected or needing direction and control to be able to undertake this. Some feedback from employers and supervisors suggested that YTS in general (not specific to MainFrame) was too ambitious in expecting young people to make a rapid transition from the kind of teaching and learning they experienced at school to the participative kind that the Training Agency encourages. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that where that practice is encouraged, YTS enables young people to be more confident and prepared to take more responsibility in the future.

MainFrame modules are built around **continuous and formative assessment**. There is some evidence that trainees and employers/supervisors negotiate frequently on the achievements of trainees, but more typical is the practice of reviewing assessment every eight weeks. Not all employers agreed that the modules facilitated assessment of trainees (mainly because they did not always cover what the trainee had actually been doing). Nevertheless, the review system employed by MainFrame agencies, using both work-based and off-the-job reviews, was generally effective in ensuring continuous assessment.

FEU commentary

The delivery of a quality YTS requires not merely a comprehensive and integrated model for programme planning and design, but procedures for ensuring that the model is actually being implemented and is as effective as possible. MainFrame is committed to the provision of a quality scheme, and is therefore encouraging the development of effective measures to ensure quality assurance. The FEU's interim evaluation found a wide variation in both practice and effectiveness of programme review procedures across the three authorities. To this there has been a response requiring each authority to examine its review procedures and to undertake to establish one that is effective. FEU will continue to measure the effectiveness of the programme review processes established and developed, and their contribution to the delivery of a quality modular YTS.

Many of the issues discussed in this and previous bulletins highlight the need for systematic and comprehensive staff development. This and other features of LEA organisation and support will be described in *Bulletin No. 6*, which will focus on assessment and accreditation in MainFrame.

Further information

This bulletin is the fifth in a series providing information about the development of the collaborative project and its evaluation. Copies of the first four are still available.

For details of the availability of these bulletins and other FEU documents, please contact the FEU Information Centre, telephone 01-321 0433 ext. 256

Information about the FEU evaluation of two-year YTS in the three LEAs and other FEU work in relation to YTS may be obtained from:

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